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THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

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REPORT  
OF  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
BY  
HON. W. D. HILL, OF OHIO,  
TO THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
FEBRUARY 14, 1881.

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Mr. HILL, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following

## REPORT:

*Your committee, having had under consideration House joint resolution No. 345, beg leave to submit the following report:*

The resolution is as follows:

JOINT RESOLUTION declaring the policy of the United States in reference to an interoceanic canal,

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the construction of an interoceanic canal connecting the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific by means of foreign capital, under the auspices of and through a charter from any European government, is hostile to the established policy of the United States, is in violation of the spirit and declarations of the Monroe doctrine, and cannot be sanctioned or assented to by this government. That the United States will assert and maintain such control and supervision over any interoceanic canal as may be necessary to protect its national interests, as a means of defense, unity, and safety, and to advance the prosperity and augment the commerce of the Atlantic and Pacific States of the Union.

The Monroe doctrine, mentioned in the resolution, is embraced in the following extract from the message of President Monroe, sent to Congress on the 2d day of December, A. D. 1823:

### MONROE DOCTRINE.

It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse, and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are, of necessity, more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective governments. And to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it therefore to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power, we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the governments who



have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have on great consideration, and on just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States. In the war between these new governments and Spain, we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered; and shall continue to adhere, provided no changes shall occur, which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States, indispensable to their security.

This declaration by the President of the United States, made at the time, was intended as a notice to the nations of the world that the people of the United States would view with just alarm any attempt to plant upon the Western Hemisphere a system of government at variance with their own. The Government of the United States was then in its infancy, containing a population of less than ten millions, with undeveloped resources, and it had scarcely recovered from the effects of the war for independence. The Territories of Louisiana and Florida were, at the time, the only accessions that had been made to its original domain. The declaration was made, in part, in defiance of the supposed attempts of the Holy Alliance, then engaged in wars in European countries, to establish and maintain their system of government wherever their power could reach. Spain had attempted, and failed, to subject certain South American Republics, whose independence the Governments of Great Britain and of the United States had acknowledged. The schemes of the Holy Alliance, with their unsettled policies, changing from time to time, gave cause of distrust to the Governments of Great Britain and the United States. A distinguished British statesman, Mr. Brougham, declared that "it was a war, not against freedom on the Ebro, or freedom on the Mincio, but against *freedom* wherever it is found, freedom by whomsoever enjoyed, freedom by whatever name achieved, by whatever institutions secured."

There seemed to have been a sympathetic feeling at that time between the Government of the United States and the Government of Great Britain upon this great question, from the fact that Mr. Canning, who was then the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, prior to the delivery of Mr. Monroe's message to Congress, called the attention of the American minister to Great Britain, Richard Rush, to the subject-matter afterwards promulgated in the message of President Monroe.\*

The attention of Thomas Jefferson was also called to the same subject. It seems that President Monroe asked his advice upon that momentous question, for we find in Jefferson's works, vol. 7, the following letter :

MONTICELLO, October 24, 1823.

To the PRESIDENT :

DEAR SIR : The question presented by the letters you have sent me is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of independence, that made us a nation. This sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us, and never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. Our first and fundamental maxim should be, *never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe*. Our second, *never to suffer Europe to*

\* Mr. Canning, while claiming that the allied powers had no right to aid Spain in her forcible attempts at the subjugation of her American colonies, or her attempts to reconquer them, still denied the doctrine set forth in Mr. Monroe's message, that the unoccupied parts of America were no longer open to colonization by Europe, and that Spain had a right to make whatever unaided efforts she chose or was able to make, to regain her lost dominion over the revolted colonies, and that the United States had no right to take umbrage at the establishment of new colonies from Europe in any such unoccupied parts of the American Continent.—[See notes Wheaton's International Law, page 909.]



*intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs.* America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own; she should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavor should surely be, to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit. She now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it; by acceding to her proposition, we detach her from the bonds, bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate a continent at one stroke, which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. \* \* \* But the war in which the present proposition might engage us, should that be its consequence, is not her war, but ours. Its object is to introduce and establish the American system of keeping out of our land all foreign powers—of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations; it is to maintain our own principle, not to depart from it. But I am clearly of Mr. Canning's opinion, that it will prevent instead of provoking war. \* \* \* Nor is the occasion to be slighted which this proposition offers, of declaring our protest against the atrocious violations of the rights of nations by the interference of any one in the internal affairs of another, so flagitiously begun by Bonaparte, and now continued by the equally lawless Alliance calling itself "Holy."

Mr. Jefferson then proceeds further, and hints at the acquisition of Cuba and other Cis-Atlantic possessions; but his advice to President Monroe in that regard seems to have been evaded or disregarded by Mr. Monroe.

Mr. Monroe distinctly says in his message above quoted that it is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparations for our defense; and he distinctly declines, in the same message, to interfere with any existing European colony or dependency, but promises aid and assistance to those governments in the western hemisphere who have declared and maintained their independence, and whose independence the United States had acknowledged. It was also afterwards declared by Mr. Calhoun, the most distinguished member of Mr. Monroe's cabinet, that this message upon foreign affairs was the combined wisdom and had the unanimous approval of the cabinet, after very careful deliberation.

The message of President Monroe, aided and sustained as it was by the moral influence of Great Britain, seems to have had the instantaneous effect of settling forever the Spanish-American question; for Lord Brougham, in referring to the message, declared in the British Parliament that "the event which is decisive on the subject is the language held with respect to Spanish-America in the message of the President of the United States."

The only action taken by Congress upon the subject of Mr. Monroe's message was a resolution offered in the House of Representatives by Mr. Clay, of Kentucky, which is as follows:

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the people of these States will not see without serious inquietude any forcible interposition of the allied powers of Europe in behalf of Spain, to reduce to their former subjection those parts of the Continent of America which have established and maintained for themselves respectively independent governments, and which have been solemnly recognized by the United States.*

Afterwards, on the 26th of May, 1824, Mr. Clay, in calling attention to this resolution, said that he "would ask a single moment's attention of the committee whilst he said only one word in respect to a resolution which he had the honor to present some time ago. The resolution to which he referred was that which proposed an expression of the feeling of Congress in regard to an attack supposed to be meditated by the allied powers of Europe upon the independence of Spanish-America. He had offered that resolution in consequence of information disclosed in the President's message at the beginning of the present session of Congress; and most certainly, if the designs imputed to the allies had



really been entertained, every consideration connected with the interests, the safety, and even the independence of this country, called for the most deliberate attention to his proposition. But such a purpose, abominable as it would have been, ought not to be attributed upon any other than the strongest evidence. Events and circumstances subsequent to the communication of the message evinced that if such a purpose were ever seriously entertained it had been relinquished. For his part, whilst he was disposed to keep a vigilant eye upon every movement of the allies, and to be ready to give his co-operation to every measure calculated to repel their aggression if any such should be attempted on the independence of any part of America, he was, on the other hand, unwilling to give them any just cause of offense against us; and to pass this resolution, after all that had occurred, in the absence of any official evidence of their now cherishing inimical designs upon this subject, might be considered as unfriendly, if not offensive. Under the full conviction, therefore, that they did not entertain any such purpose so diabolical as that would be of attempting to reduce Spanish-America to its ancient subjection, or of compelling it to adopt the monarchical form of government, he should continue to abstain from pressing upon the attention of the House his resolution, and should allow it to sleep where it now reposes, on the table."

This seems to have been the only action taken during that session of Congress on that part of the message of President Monroe. Mr. Clay afterwards, while Secretary of State during the administration of John Quincy Adams, in an official dispatch addressed by him to Mr. Poinsett, American minister to Mexico, dated March 25, 1825, says that Mr. Monroe uttered his declaration in the face of the world at a moment when there was reason to apprehend that the allied powers were entertaining designs inimical to the freedom if not independence of the new government. There is ground for believing that the declaration of it had considerable effect in preventing the maturity, if not in preventing the abandonment of all such designs.

The following is Mr. Clay's dispatch to Mr. Poinsett:

The United States have neither desired nor sought to obtain for themselves, in their commercial relations with the new States, any privileges which were not common to other nations. They have proposed, and only wished to establish as the basis of all their commercial treaties, those of equality and reciprocity. They can consent to no other. Ready, themselves, to extend to the United Mexican States any favors which they have granted to other nations, the United States feel themselves authorized to demand, in this respect, a perfect reciprocity. They could not agree to treat on the principle of a concession to any European power, of commercial privileges which were denied to them. (Mr. Clay to Mr. Poinsett, November 9, 1825, Gales and Seaton's Register, 19th Congress, 1st session.)

The following note from Mr. Clay to Mr. Middleton :

But in the indulgence of this sympathetic feeling, they have not, for one moment, been unmindful of the duties of that neutrality which they had deliberately announced. And the best proof of the fidelity with which they have strictly fulfilled its obligations is furnished in the fact that, during the progress of the war, they have been unjustly accused by both parties of violating their declared neutrality. (Letter of Mr. Clay to Mr. Middleton, May 10, 1825, Gales and Seaton's Register, 19th Congress, 1st session.)

The Monroe doctrine never became prominent in American politics from that time until shortly after the Mexican war. It then became a subject of discussion in Congress, upon the proposition of Great Britain to extend a protectorate over Yucatan, during which discussion Mr. Calhoun declared that the message of Mr. Monroe, sustained by the moral power of England, gave a blow to the Holy Alliance from which it never recovered; and he further declared that from that time for

ward, the Holy Alliance had gradually decayed until it utterly perished; and that the late revolutions in Europe had put an end to all its work, and nothing remained of all it ever did.

From the words contained in Mr. Monroe's message; from the interpretation given to it by the action of the Congress to which it was delivered; from Mr. Clay's dispatch to Mr. Poinsett, and from numerous speeches of eminent public men made in the Senate and House of Representatives afterwards, it is evident that the purposes for which the message was written at that time had been accomplished, so far as Spanish domination on the Western Hemisphere was concerned.

The same view was taken by John Randolph, of Roanoke, and by Mr. Webster, of Massachusetts.

In 1848, after the close of the Mexican war, the President of the United States, Mr. Polk, asked the application of the Monroe doctrine, by the extension by the United States of a protectorate over Yucatan; but it seems that Mr. Calhoun, who was one of the constitutional advisers of Mr. Monroe when the doctrine was first announced, opposed the policy of Mr. Polk, and declared that it was not, and never had been, the settled policy of this country. He further said that if it should ever become so, to the wide extent which this declaration had been interpreted to give, our peace would ever be disturbed, the gates of our Janus would ever stand open, wars would never cease, and that he was unwilling to have this task—which did not belong to us—assumed by our government. The opinion of Mr. Calhoun, thus expressed, from his associations with Mr. Monroe, as a constitutional adviser, his great ability as a statesman, and his distinguished public services, ought to entitle it to such weight, so far as the interpretation of Mr. Monroe's message is concerned, as perhaps should be given to that of no other public man connected with our political history. At any rate, Congress refused to follow the advice of President Polk, and did not extend a protectorate over Yucatan.

It is well known that Mr. Douglas took decided ground against the ratification of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and claimed that the principles of the Monroe doctrine should be extended everywhere on the North American continent. The Clayton-Bulwer treaty was nevertheless ratified by the Senate.

Mr. Cass also took somewhat the same view as Mr. Douglas, but did not express himself in quite as bold and definite terms. On the question of interoceanic communication, he expressed himself on the 15th of January, 1853, in the following language (Congressional Globe, 32d Congress):

All we want is a fair and equal field for exertion, and if we have not industry and enterprise enough to hold our own way in the great career of advancement we deserve to fall behind our rivals and cotemporaries, and ought to find no one "to do us reverence." But I have no fear of this, nor indeed has any one else. It should, therefore, be a cardinal maxim of our policy to preserve, as far as we can, the integrity of the cis-Atlantic Republics, for it is almost as much for their interest as it is for ours that these great lines of communication should be opened to all the world and free to the competition of every nation.—[Remarks of Mr. Cass, January 15, 1853, in Senate on colonization in North America.]

An able writer in the *North American Review*, in April, 1856, says: "The message of Mr. Monroe was intended as a caveat to the designs of the allies, and as an earnest protest against the extension to this continent of the political system on which they were based. 'What,' he asks, 'were these designs, and what this political system which endangered the peace and safety of the United States? The history of the alliance furnishes a sufficient answer to both of these questions. The designs



of the European monarchy against the independence of the Spanish-American States, furthered, as they would be, in accordance with the political system which recognized only the doctrine of the legitimacy and the divine right of kings, would necessarily menace the very existence of our own institutions, since these had been founded on the most contemptuous disregard of the very principles deemed most 'holy' by an alliance which arrogated to itself the undoubted right to take a hostile attitude in regard to these States in which the overthrow of the government may operate as an example. In what country did the overthrow of the legitimacy, then, exert so potent an influence as in the United States? And if the Spanish-American Republics are now to be assailed for their imitation of our example, could we hope, as the embodied representatives of the very principles most obnoxious to the Holy Alliance, to escape their flaming zeal in the cause of 'order and legitimacy' after they had finished with the South American Republics? A blow aimed at them because they were republics was a blow equally aimed at the independence of our own country, and hence it was that Mr. Monroe declared that any such intervention of the allied powers of Europe could not be regarded in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States—a declaration characterized no less by the calmness of its delivery than by the patriotic foresight in which it was advanced. Originated for the purpose of meeting a particular conjuncture of events, it finds in them alone its real purport and its justification."

A further interpretation of the Monroe doctrine is given by Wheaton on International Law, page 124. He says:

The policy of the American Government, in regard to Europe, adopted at an early stage of the war, which had so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remained the same. This policy was, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of the European powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for them; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve these relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But with regard to the American continents, circumstances were widely different. It was impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of these continents without endangering the peace and happiness of the United States; it was therefore impossible that the latter should behold such interference in any form with indifference.

President Woolsey, of Yale College, in his work on International Law, page 67, *et seq.*, takes this view of the Monroe doctrine:

The proceedings at Verona indirectly gave rise to what has been called the Monroe doctrine, which met the reigning principle of interference in Europe by a similar principle in the opposite direction. The history of this doctrine is, in brief, the following: At Verona the subject was agitated of attempting, in conformity with the known wishes of the absolutists in Spain, to bring back the Spanish colonies into subjection to the mother country. This fact having been communicated to our government by that of Great Britain in 1823, and the importance of some public protest on our part being insisted upon, President Monroe, in his annual message, used the following language: "That we should consider any attempt on the part (of the allied powers), to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety," and again, "that we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing (governments on this side of the Atlantic whose independence we had acknowledged), or controlling in any manner their destiny by any European power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States." Soon afterwards a resolution was moved in Congress embodying the same principle, but was never called up. But the mere declaration of the President, meeting with the full sympathy of England, put an end to the designs to which the message refers.

In another place of the same message, while alluding to the question of boundary on the Pacific between the United States and Russia, the President speaks thus: "The occasion has been judged proper for asserting as a principle, in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not



to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power." Was it intended by this to preclude the South American republics, without their will, from receiving such colonies within their borders—of surrounding their territory for that purpose? Such a thing, probably, was not thought of. Mr. Adams, when President, in 1825, thus refers to Mr. Monroe's principle, while speaking in a special message of a congress at Panama: "An agreement between all the parties represented at the meeting, that each will guard by its own means against the establishment of any future European colony within its borders may be found desirable. This was more than two years since announced by my predecessor to the world as a principle resulting from the emancipation of both the American continents." Mr. Adams, when Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe, originated the "principle," and must have known what he meant. But the principle, even in this tame form, was repudiated by the House of Representatives, in a resolution declaring that the United States "ought not to become parties" with any of the South American republics "to any joint declaration for the purpose of preventing the interference of any of the European powers with their independence or form of government, or to any compact for the purpose of preventing colonization upon the continent of America."

On the whole, then, (1) the doctrine is not a national one. The House of Representatives, indeed, had no right to settle questions of policy or of international law. But the cabinet has as little. The opinion of one part of the government neutralized that of another. (2.) The principal first mentioned of resisting attempts to overthrow the liberties of the Spanish republics was one of most righteous self-defense and of vital importance. And such it will probably always be regarded if a similar juncture should arise.

The Monroe doctrine came up again in another shape in 1848. President Polk, having announced that the Government of Yucatan had offered the dominion over that country to Great Britain, Spain, and the United States, urges on Congress such measures as may prevent it from becoming a colony and a part of the dominions of any European power, which would be, he says, in contravention of the declaration of Mr. Monroe, and which must, by no means, be allowed.

Mr. Calhoun, in his speech on this subject, shows that the case is very different from that contemplated by Mr. Monroe; that the declarations of the latter could not be regarded as expressing the settled policy of this country, and that they were mere declarations without threat of resistance. The "colonization" contemplated by the Monroe doctrine could not apply to Yucatan, and the possibility of England (which was especially intended) acquiring power there was remote. The principle, he adds, "which lies at the bottom of the (President's) recommendation is, that when any power on this continent becomes involved in internal warfare, and the weaker side chooses to make application to us for support, we are bound to give them support, for fear the offer of the sovereignty of the country may be made to some other power and accepted. It goes infinitely and dangerously beyond Mr. Monroe's declaration. It puts it in the power of other countries on the continent to make us a party to all their wars."

To lay down the principle that the acquisition of territory on this continent, by any European power, cannot be allowed by the United States, would go far beyond any measures dictated by the system of the balance of power, for the rule of self-preservation is not applicable in our case; we fear no neighbors. To lay down the principle that no political systems unlike our own, no change from republican forms to those of monarchy, can be endured in the Americas, would be a step in advance of the congresses at Laybach and Verona, for they apprehended destruction to their political fabrics, and we do not. But to resist attempts of European powers to alter the constitutions of states on this side of the water, is a wise and just opposition to interference. Anything beyond this justifies the system which absolute governments have initiated for the suppression of revolutions by main force.

That the policy of Mr. Monroe was one of non-intervention by European powers, and the opposition of the Government of the United States to intervention on the part of European powers to intermeddle with quarrels not their own, to aid and build up the South American republics, whose independence had been achieved by their own valor, is clear from the fact that the same Administration recognized another system in the Brazilian Empire, by entering into diplomatic intercourse with that empire. This policy is further illustrated in the position taken by Mr. Seward, when he warned Maximilian to quit Mexico. In his dispatch to the American minister at Versailles, bearing date of September 6, 1865, he said:

We do not insist, or claim, that Mexico and the other States of the American con-



inent shall adopt the political institutions to which we are so earnestly attached, but we do hold, that the people of these countries are entitled to exercise the freedom of choosing and establishing institutions like our own if they are preferred.

Ever since that time there has been some sort of republican form of government in these South American states, especially in the United States of Colombia. The Government of the United States has recognized their existence as independent republics, has entered into treaties with them from time to time upon various subjects, has been represented at their seat of government by ministers resident, and they in turn have been represented at Washington, in the same way. The very subject-matter of this resolution was the subject of a treaty signed at Bogota, on the 12th of December, 1846, ratified in 1848. "That treaty was," to use the language of Secretary Evarts, "by its own stipulation to remain in full force and effect for twenty years; and then, if neither party gave notice of its intended termination, it was to continue in force, terminable by either party by a twelve-month's notice. No such notice, on either side, has ever been given, and no other treaty with New Granada, on this subject, has ever been executed. This treaty is consequently in force, and the canal communication, should it be accomplished in accordance therewith, and with the concurrence of the United States that it is in such accordance, which under this treaty must be deemed essential, would be to-day under the protection and guarantee of the United States, and both its projectors and the Government of New Granada, would be authorized in certain contingencies to call upon the Government of the United States for the fulfillment of this obligation."

That treaty contains this provision in Article 35:

The Government of New Granada guarantees to the Government of the United States that the right of way or transit across the Isthmus of Panama upon any modes of communication that now exist, or that may be hereafter constructed, shall be open and free to the government and citizens of the United States, and for the transportation of any articles of produce, manufactures, or merchandise of lawful commerce, belonging to the citizens of the United States; that no other charges shall be levied or collected upon the citizens of the United States, or their said merchandise thus passing over any road or canal that may be made by the Government of New Granada, or by authority of the same, than is, under like circumstances, levied upon and collected from the Granadian citizens; that any lawful produce, manufactures, or merchandise belonging to citizens of the United States thus passing from one sea to the other, in either direction, for the purpose of exportation to any other foreign country, shall not be liable to any import duties whatever, or having paid such duties, they shall be entitled to drawback upon their exportation, nor shall citizens of the United States be liable to any duties, tolls, or charges of any kind, to which native citizens are not subjected, for thus passing the said isthmus. And in order to secure to themselves the tranquil and constant enjoyment of these advantages, and as a special compensation for the said advantages, and for the favors they have acquired by the 4th, 5th, and 6th articles of this treaty, the United States guarantee positively and efficaciously to New Granada by the present stipulation, the perfect neutrality of the beforementioned isthmus, with the view that the free transit from one to the other sea may not be interrupted or embarrassed in any future time while such treaty may exist; and in consequence the United States also guarantee in the same manner the rights of sovereignty and property which New Granada has and possesses over the said territory.

The debates in Congress from time to time on this question, beginning in 1823, and extending down to 1856, are very voluminous, and embrace every phase of the subject. We have omitted presenting extracts from all the speeches of our eminent men, because it would make the report too lengthy to be read. Already a voluminous document, to wit, Executive Document No. 112, containing the message of President Hayes to Congress on the 11th of February, 1880, and a learned communication from Secretary Evarts, containing certain articles of the



treaty of 1848 with New Granada, the treaty with the Nicaraguan States, diplomatic correspondence from time to time and proposed modifications of the treaty of '48, have been published and read by members of the 46th Congress; and while it may be admitted that the message of President Monroe had no reference whatever to the construction of the ship-canal across the Isthmus of Panama, or anywhere between North and South America connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, yet the extension of the American domain to the Pacific coast, the rapid settlement, development, and growth, and the commercial importance of our Pacific possessions, our extended and defenceless sea-coast on both the Atlantic and Pacific, all of which is the result of recent development, naturally and justly make the construction of any interoceanic communication at these points a matter of vast and paramount importance to the people of the United States; and we think that it does not manifest undue selfishness on the part of the Government of the United States to guard with great vigilance any proposed attempt on the part of any European power, by its own agency or the agency of others under European control, to engage in the construction of such intercommunication.

If, then, the Monroe doctrine could properly apply to the establishment of monarchical systems on the Western Hemisphere in 1823, your committee are of opinion that it would also apply to any attempt on the part of European governments to cause so great a change in the navigation of the two great oceans, as the construction of this proposed canal must necessarily do. The United States Government, in 1823, by this bold declaration on the part of her President, gave notice to the world that she would regard as unfriendly any effort on the part of European governments to establish monarchical systems on the Western Hemisphere, as a danger and a menace to her peace and safety; and that she would aid the South American republics, by force, if necessary, in maintaining their independence from foreign conquest and dominion. If the message of Mr. Monroe meant anything at all, it must have meant this, otherwise, it was a mere empty declaration of words without meaning and without result. The United States, by the treaty of 1848 with New Granada, referred to, have also promised their aid in preserving the neutrality of the Isthmus of Panama and the dominion of the Republic of New Granada over that Isthmus, and when the United States gave notice to the world that she would regard as unfriendly any intervention of European powers, it would seem, from the language of Mr. Calhoun, above cited, that she also promised her own non-intervention unless menaced by threatened dangers on the part of said European powers. She has justly the right, therefore, to be consulted in all matters pertaining to the construction of any mode of transit across the Isthmus of Panama.

No American statesman, so far as we are advised, has ever taken the bold ground that aid and proffers of friendship tendered by the United States to any of her sister republics on this side of the Atlantic meant that those republics should be denied the right to improve their own territory. Every government should have the power to exercise the right of eminent domain over her own territory; and to exercise that right over a domain not her own, is a reiteration of the declaration of right claimed by the Holy Alliance, or rather, a revamping of the principles of the unjust Holy Alliance. The United States are too strong to fear, and too great to be jealous. Should the construction of an interoceanic canal across the Isthmus of Panama by the Republic of New Granada be made under proper guarantees and stipulations and in exact accordance



with existing treaties there could certainly be no fear on our part from the Republic of New Granada. Our great superiority of strength and all those elements of power which constitute a great nation of people utterly forbid the idea of danger from any such source as that; and in the event of the construction of a ship-canal across the Isthmus of Panama, or elsewhere, by an association or associations of citizens of different nationalities, under the laws, guidance, and control of the Republic of New Granada, with means furnished from all parts of the globe—as means for all great improvements involving vast expenditures are always furnished—should, in the event of war, become a subject of dispute between the Government of the United States and any other government, it would be quite as easy to seize the canal by force of arms, and subject it to American control, as it would, by force of arms, to prevent its construction. The difference would be the worth and uses of the transit after the war was over, against the barren and fruitless obstruction to its construction.

That such a transit would greatly benefit the commerce of all the States, on both oceans, and be of great advantage, in time of war, to the United States, cannot be doubted. Should it be constructed entirely by the United States—under the absolute control of the United States—and war should ensue, it would probable abide the hazard of the conflict, and fall into the hands of the strongest party. By whomsoever constructed, it could never be a fort, nor would the dangers of its navigation deter a strong power from attempting its seizure and control.

The logical sequence of the Monroe doctrine is, that the flag of all our cis-Atlantic republics shall, with their approval and our aid, forever float over their own dominion, and that no other flag shall.

While we are so justly proud of our own giant strides towards future wealth, power, and national greatness, would it not add to that pride, so justly cherished, if our people could look with welcome composure on all efforts of our weaker sisters to emulate our example? An increase of their population, wealth, and commerce is a corresponding increase of our wealth and commerce—the differences in soil, climate, and production making an interchange and extension of all our commercial relations desirable and profitable.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs cannot urge upon the House the adoption of a resolution in violation of existing treaties. That respect which we have always demanded and always commanded from nations with which we are on friendly terms, should be extended by us to such nations. If we have entered into solemn treaty stipulations with other governments, weaker than our own, which the lapse of years and the onward march of unforeseen events make seemingly disadvantageous to us, every principle of good faith, of equity, and that magnanimity which should impel the stronger power to respect the weaker, would require at least a reasonable effort on our part, by diplomatic intercourse, or by treaty amendments, or treaty abrogations, to secure such other guarantees and securities as would protect our national interests and comport with our national dignity.

The legislative branch of the Government of the United States is supposed to be its most important department, because it is presumed to speak the voice of the people of the United States; yet the Constitution only confers—and wisely confers—upon one branch of Congress the right to participate in the treaty-making power, and that branch, too, which is not elected by the people. And so sacred was this power regarded by the framers of the Constitution that they provided that all the proceedings of that branch of Congress, in the ratification of treaties, should



be kept forever secret. No certain bold declaration on the part of Congress could abrogate a treaty, but could hamper and greatly hinder the Executive Department of the Government—always in possession of much information and many facts unknown to Congress—in adjusting difficulties that seemingly exist. If the message of Mr. Monroe had such a salutary effect as to frighten all Europe, except England, from our western shores, your committee are of opinion that should the emergency arise, a like declaration, together with the never-ceasing vigilance of the State Department, backed with the greatly superior power of our government, at this time, as compared with 1823, would have a like effect, should our rights be anywhere, or in any manner, threatened or menaced. Your committee, therefore, as an affirmation of the Monroe doctrine, believe *that Americans must rule America*, and that as a notice to all the world that the United States, cherishing a friendly spirit to all nations, will adhere to strict neutrality in all transatlantic affairs, and expect a like non-interference in all American affairs, whether in the Northern or Southern western hemisphere, and that we recommend the adoption of the following resolutions as a substitute for the House joint resolution 345:

SEC. 1. *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the establishment of any form of protectorate by any one of the powers of Europe over any of the independent states of this continent, or the introduction from any quarter of a scheme or policy which would carry with it a right to any European power to interfere with their concerns, or to control in any other manner their destiny, or the transfer to any such power, by conquest, cession, or acquisition in any other way, of any of those states, or any portion thereof, is a measure to which this government has been and is still opposed, and which, should the attempt be made, it will regard and treat as dangerous to our peace, prosperity, and safety.

SEC. 2. That the construction of any public work, connecting the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific, by any European government or power, whether the same be constructed at Panama or elsewhere, would be in violation of the spirit and letter of the Monroe doctrine, and could not be sanctioned by the Government of the United States.

SEC. 3. That should a canal be constructed across the isthmus of Panama, or elsewhere, this government will insist that it shall not be under the control of any European government or power; that it shall be free to the commerce of the world upon equal terms, and that no discrimination shall ever be made against the United States in peace or war.

SEC. 4. That the President be requested to take the steps necessary and proper for the abrogation of any existing treaties whose terms are in conflict with this declaration of principles.





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